

## Hold fees for now: ANC

The ANC has called on the government to hold off on increasing student fees for the 2017 academic year until all parties have found an economically viable solution.



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Student leaders threatened to bring universities to a standstill and embark on another #FeesMustFall protest if a fee increment is implemented.

ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe on Sunday, 14 August 2016, said that fee increases had been discussed by the party's national executive council and the debate would be taken to the cabinet.

"We are not saying fee increments are banned but this should not be rushed until all stakeholders and consultations have been concluded, because whatever we do must be economically viable and affordable for education. If we take a decision to have a no-fee system we might collapse the system."

But student leaders said the fight for free education continues and #FeesMustfall has warned that history will repeat itself if there is a fee increase next year.

The Department of Higher Education and Training said it would use the police to protect university property.

The fees commission appointed by President Jacob Zuma after the #FeesMustFall protests last year disclosed on Friday that the Treasury had not budgeted for 2017 being the second consecutive year without a fees increase.

The Sunday Times reported at the weekend that a 6.3% fees increase had been recommended by the Council on Higher Education, a statutory body. But Minister of Higher Education and Training Blade Nzimande said the department had not made an announcement about fees for 2017.

He called for patience, saying he would speak to all stakeholders, including students and university councils, before making an announcement.

Chumani Maxwele, a student leader at the University of Cape Town, said students are watching and waiting for the commission to finish its work.

Wits University's EFF student leader, Vuyani Pambo, said a police presence and the use of private security on campuses were not new and they would not stop protests.

Student leaders did not say anything about plans for student action but warned that their protests would be "a force to be reckoned with".

"We expect a bigger mass action. Every action is a rehearsal for something bigger; those who doubted us last year will be with us this year."

Source: *The Times* via I-Net Bridge

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